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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING
OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 10 July 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement by His Excellency Mr. Milan Milutinović, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, delivered at the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Countries of South-eastern Europe, held at Sofia on 6 and 7 July 1996.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 81 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Statement by the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Countries of South-eastern Europe, held at Sofia on 6 and 7 July 1996

First of all, I would like to thank our hosts, and Foreign Minister Pirinski in particular, for their hospitality and attention and the excellent organization of this meeting, to which we attach great importance. It is my deep conviction that we have gathered together today guided by the common desire and resolved more than ever before to address ourselves to reviving and strengthening regional cooperation and, in doing so, to make a steadfast contribution to peace, security and the building of lasting good-neighbourliness and the all-round prosperity of our peoples.

At the first Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in 1988, we confirmed the commitment of our countries to the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and non-interference in internal affairs as a basis of intra-Balkan relations and cooperation. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remains committed to respecting these principles, because it is on them that it wishes to build good-neighbourly relations and develop all-round cooperation with all countries of the Balkans and South-eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, the changes in Europe and the world in the last several years have been tragically reflected in the sensitive region of the Balkans. The civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina took a heavy toll in human lives and resulted in enormous material destruction. The sanctions unjustly imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia caused vast damage to the entire region and Europe as a whole. The restoration and promotion of intra-Balkan cooperation is the best way to make up for what has been lost and to open up the prospects for a faster economic and social development.

From the very beginning of the Yugoslav crisis, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has called for its peaceful political solution. It rendered a decisive contribution to the establishment of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conclusion and implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. It has consistently fulfilled all the obligations deriving from that Agreement. The signing at Florence of the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control brought to a successful end the first phase of the negotiations on military matters. Before us is the obligation, provided for by the Dayton Agreement, to reach, in future negotiations, an agreement on regional arms control, as well as to define new security arrangements in this part of Europe. This should be our common contribution to the elaboration of a new security model for Europe in the twenty-first century.

We attach priority importance to the implementation of the civilian and political components of the Peace Agreement. This is particularly true of the preparation and holding of free and democratic elections in Bosnia and

Herzegovina scheduled for 14 September, which should result in the establishment of legitimate organs and institutions.

We attach first-rate economic and political importance to the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as of other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Even development of all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and equal treatment of the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the allocation of financial resources represent the basic preconditions for the restoration of confidence and coexistence. We are convinced that the Balkan countries will find their own interest in, and render their full contribution to, this process.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which provided shelter to over 600,000 refugees of all nationalities, is interested in, and calls for, the free and safe return of refugees to their homes. It is against each and every form of pressure and administrative and other obstacles preventing refugees from deciding freely on their place of residence.

I would like to point out that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia appreciates the understanding and constructive attitude of the majority of the Balkan countries during the Yugoslav crisis. We call on all Balkan countries to increase their support to the reintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into all international organizations, including all international financial institutions. This is an important precondition for the success of the peace process, for the strengthening of peace and stability and for the development of all-round cooperation in the region. We expect such support to be reflected in joint positions to be taken at this meeting.

We consider that the creation of an environment which would be open to the present-day economic, technological, cultural and other positive trends in Europe and the world is the basis for a faster integration of the Balkans in the modern-day integration processes in Europe. This we also recognize in the regional approach of the European Union to cooperation with the countries of South-eastern Europe. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia strongly supports this approach. It is in the common economic interest for the European Union to support the strengthening of our mutual cooperation, i.e. greater linkage among economic, market, infrastructure and, above all, human resources of our countries.

All Balkan countries are interested in the creation of relations of exemplary good-neighbourliness and privileged partnership. It is only through constructive efforts, patience and mutual confidence that we can create a favourable climate for a pragmatic solution of all and in particular open bilateral questions.

The States created out of the former Yugoslavia have been called upon to make a contribution to the construction of such relations in our region through the process of full normalization of mutual relations. In its Constitutional Declaration of 27 April 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expressed its readiness to fully respect the rights and interests of the newly created States in the region of the former Yugoslavia and confirmed that it had no territorial aspirations in its environment. It has persisted in maintaining this position

throughout the Yugoslav crisis and will continue to do so also in the future. It is committed to bringing the ongoing process of normalization, which has already yielded significant results, to a successful end.

The creation of conditions for all citizens of the Balkans to enjoy equal rights, irrespective of their nationality or religion, and equal possibilities to use the achievements of the present-day world in the spheres of civilization and democracy is the task and the responsibility of our generations. By its Constitution and laws, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia guarantees full equality, under the highest world standards, to all its citizens irrespective of their nationality, religion or other characteristics.

We trust and believe that the right time has come for all Balkan countries to turn themselves to their common future and focus their efforts on the pursuit of the following goals:

- The promotion of multilateral political dialogue and cooperation at all levels and on all questions of common interest. In that context, we call for the establishment of a consultative Assembly of the Balkan Countries as soon as possible, which would convene either regularly or as need be and would consist of permanent delegations of Parliaments of all Balkan countries;

- Dynamic and harmonious economic development of the Balkans as a priority. This can be achieved by various measures, in particular by the creation of favourable conditions for the investment of the capital of international financial institutions, the European Union and the countries of significant investment capacity;

- Reduction of administrative, customs and other artificial barriers and their eventual lifting;

- Cooperation in harmonizing national legislations with the legislation of the European Union;

- Establishment of direct links among banks and the founding of joint banks that would operate on a commercial basis and the speeding of the process of the establishment of a regional bank of the Balkans;

- Introduction of economic criteria, modernization and cost-effective policy for the development of transportation infrastructure, establishment of cooperation in the field of air services and the setting-up of a Balkan agency for air traffic safety;

- Harmonization of approaches to international organizations in the field of telecommunications;

- Linking of power networks of the Balkan countries in which the power network of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia could become a focal point and the establishment of cooperation in linking gas and oil pipelines;

- Establishment of a separate programme for the protection of the environment of the Balkan countries (Balkan Environmental Programme), i.e. a centre for the environment. My country would be pleased and honoured to have such a centre headquartered in [the Federal Republic of] Yugoslavia. We are convinced that this form of cooperation would speed up and facilitate implementation of European standards;

- Cooperation of police and other competent services in combating organized crime, terrorism, arms and narcotic drug trafficking and money laundering;

- Cooperation in the field of information, science, culture, management, tourism and in other areas (The Balkan Pool), which has already registered important results and deserves our coordinated and steady support.

Today, the peoples of the Balkans are also faced with a choice: to remain disunited or to join hands and team up with other peoples of Europe on the road towards common prosperity. Focusing on diversities in the Balkans will destabilize Europe as a whole; rather than that, the peoples living in these lands should get together in a common thrust for peace, for economic and any other prosperity. If we fail in this enterprise, we run the risk of being pushed to the margin of modern-day developments for a long time to come. Therefore we must resolutely seek to overcome our past misunderstandings, often foisted on us by others, through dialogue and all-round cooperation.

With that in mind, we trust and believe that the initiative of the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Zhan Videnov, which Yugoslavia fully supported, will be a new beginning on the road towards the creation of a community of the equal peoples of the Balkans and the transformation of the region into a zone of lasting peace, stability, prosperity and good-neighbourliness.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is ready to make a full contribution to reaching agreements and working out a concrete programme and plan of activities at this meeting which will open up prospects for dynamic regional cooperation and yield fruitful results of interest for all Balkan countries.